

**2007/2008
Annual Report**



Western Economic
Diversification Canada

Diversification de l'économie
de l'Ouest Canada

Canada

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CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

We have reached a major milestone as a Community Futures organization having completed 20 years of service to the North Eastman region. It has truly been a pleasure and I am proud to serve on the Board of Directors of this Corporation that is dedicated to community economic development and building capacity at the local and regional levels to strengthen the communities we live in. Our services have helped entrepreneurs start new businesses and create employment, and have helped communities and community groups improve their local economies.

In reflecting back over our 20 years, we have seen many changes and have met many challenges, but we also experienced numerous successes. Back in 1988, we were two Community Futures committees – one devoted to community development (Winnipeg River Brokenhead Ventures), and one devoted to business development (Granite Shield Incentives), each with its own Board of Directors who were appointed by the federal government. Our operational funding was provided by Human Resources Development Canada. In 1994 the two organizations were amalgamated to form Winnipeg River Brokenhead Community Futures Development Corporation, and in 1995 program support was transferred from HRDC to Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD). In addition, instead of Directors being appointed by Ottawa, they were now municipal appointments.

We can be very proud of what we have achieved over our 20 years, and I'd like to give you just a few of the highlights.

- We have provided almost \$6.5 Million of financial assistance to entrepreneurs in the form of repayable loans that have created or maintained over 600 jobs in the region.
- We have been actively involved in programs and projects for Entrepreneurs with Disabilities, and young entrepreneurs
- We deliver a very successful Self Employment Program on behalf of Employment Manitoba which has had 424 unemployed people participate to go on to become successful entrepreneurs
- We have administered the Whiteshell Community Adjustment Fund on behalf of WD, which, by the end of this year, will have seen \$3.75 Million invested in 35 community economic development projects in communities affected by the downsizing and closure of AECL, resulting in significant positive economic impact in the region.
- We have seen some of the projects that we initiated become their own independent entities such as JUST Training Corporation, La Vérendrye Trail Association, Shining Waters Heritage Association, Friends of Old Pinawa, and the Eastern Manitoba Artists Co-op.
- We have built community capacity through the facilitation of numerous strategic planning sessions and Board governance training sessions for community groups, and organizing community and business development workshops. Our assistance with project planning, feasibility studies, funding applications, and resource support has helped many communities undertake successful major projects involving such things as: tourism, cultural and heritage initiatives; the establishment of community-based co-operatives; a business centre and business incubator; and resource and learning centres.

- We have organized Youth Career Fairs, small business trade shows, a regional economic development symposium, a provincial Community Futures conference, regional exhibits at Rural Forum, and with the help of several partners the Showcasing Eastern Manitoba learning event and trade show.
- We have won two national awards and three provincial awards for community economic development projects that we were instrumental in.
- We have seen several of our clients acknowledged as success stories having been featured in our Provincial Association's newsletters, in WD's publication "Access West", in the Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre's newsletter, and in the Pan-West and Pan-Canadian Community Futures Annual Reports. Some of our clients have been featured in the Free Press, on HomeBiz TV, and the TV show "On the Road Again". In addition, a number of our clients have received or been nominated for prestigious awards such as the *Manitoba Woman Entrepreneur of the Year Award*.
- We have developed an extensive network of partners with government departments, agencies, organizations and community groups. These partnerships enable us to better serve our clients, and in many cases help provide services that could not otherwise be offered, and also help us further our region's economic development efforts.
- Over the last several years we have worked hard to facilitate a cooperative and coordinated regional approach to economic development. With the support and commitment of our communities to the implementation of the regional economic development strategy, we have made some significant progress.

This is just a small snapshot of the work we have accomplished and the contribution Community Futures Winnipeg River has made to helping entrepreneurs, communities, community groups, and the region as a whole.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the hard work of our Board of Directors who volunteer their time, energy, and expertise to ensure that our organization meets the needs of our communities. In the past year they have collectively contributed close to 1,000 hours of volunteer time to the work of our Corporation. In addition, many of them have spent countless hours in their own community promoting economic development and assisting local committees with their individual projects and programs. We would like to congratulate Roland Dandeneau who this year received the Minister's Award for Excellence in Community Futures Volunteerism.

We value our partnership with WD and thank them for their continued support and commitment to the Community Futures Program. And finally, on behalf of the Board of Directors, I would like to thank the staff for their hard work and dedication to the Corporation, and for the integrity and passion with which they represent Community Futures Winnipeg River.

Teresa Gmiterek
Chairperson
Community Futures Winnipeg River

Introduction

Community Futures Winnipeg River is a community-based regional economic development organization serving the needs of the North Eastman region of Manitoba. Our mission is to serve our member communities in the pursuit of continued growth and prosperity through the support of sustainable economic development opportunities in the region.

Community Futures Winnipeg River serves a large geographic region roughly north of the Trans-Canada Highway to Bissett and Seymourville, and from the Ontario border to the outskirts of Winnipeg. The Corporation has been in operation since 1988 and is managed by a volunteer Board of Directors who are appointed to represent our member Municipal and Community Councils, Sagkeeng First Nation, and Whiteshell Provincial Park, as well as a Director at Large. The Directors bring considerable expertise to the organization and several of them are entrepreneurs. They are very knowledgeable about the communities they represent and the challenges that their communities face. Their participation on our Board ensures that the needs of their community are reflected in our planning and development of our programs and services.

We would like to acknowledge and thank Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) for their continued commitment to the Community Futures Program. Without their support, we would not be able to operate this important economic development program. We are also fortunate to continue to have the support of Employment Manitoba for the delivery of the Self Employment Program. The valuable partnerships and strategic alliances we have formed with other provincial and federal government departments, the Western Canada Business Service Network, municipalities, and community and regional organizations have also contributed significantly to the work we do as a Corporation to promote and advance community economic development for our region.

We are a regional site for the Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre and maintain an extensive business resource library. Two community access computers provide public access to high-speed internet. Service Canada operates an outreach site at our office which is staffed every other Thursday. The outreach site provides a one-stop shop for people to access information and resources related to federal government programs and services. In partnership with J.U.S.T Training Corporation, we also host the Manitoba Youth Job Centre in our offices during the summer.

Exterior signage, stationary, display panels, advertising, and our website were all redesigned to reflect the new Community Futures common brand. This Fiscal Year our website experienced 6,102 page loads by 2,590 visitors.

Winnipeg River continues to actively participate in the Community Futures movement. Mary Greber served on a Pan-West Sub-Committee to develop curriculum for two Community Economic Development (CED) modules that will be used as part of professional development training for Community Futures staff across Western Canada. She also continued to work as a member of the Manitoba Community Futures Professional Development Committee, and Marketing Committee. Jenny Petersen was involved in a Pan-West Sub-Committee which was responsible for identifying issues and providing advice and recommendations related to the use of The Exceptional Assistant (TEA) software program for the online Performance Measurement Tool for reporting to WD. She also co-facilitated a one-day training program for Manitoba Community Futures staff on the Performance Measurement Tool. Jenny continues to serve on the Board for the Community Futures Investment Fund which provides for a readily-available pool of dollars that can be accessed

by Community Futures offices in Manitoba that are short of funds needed to provide business loans to their clients. Director Roland Dandeneau serves as our representative on the Board of Directors of Community Futures Manitoba and as their representative on the Pan-Canadian Community Futures Association.

We are very proud to have been the recipient of the Minister's Award for Excellence and Innovation for our work with the Lakeview Consumer Co-op, and for Director Roland Dandeneau who received the Minister's Award for Excellence in Community Futures Volunteerism.

Community Futures Winnipeg River has a cohesive and dedicated team of staff and Directors who continue to proudly serve the business development and community development needs of the region. Despite having taken on some projects that required extensive amount of staff time, we managed to meet or exceed all of our performance targets. We measure the success of our organization to that of our clients and our communities, and we are very proud of the achievements made this year.

This Annual Report highlights the major activities and accomplishments of Community Futures Winnipeg River over the past year.

Board of Directors and Staff

Board of Directors:

Teresa Gmiterek, Chairperson	Town of Beausejour
Doug Thomasson, Vice-Chairperson	RM of Brokenhead
Chris Lund, Secretary-Treasurer	RM of Reynolds
George Harbottle	RM of Alexander
Paul Chapman	Town of Lac du Bonnet
Don Halbert	RM of Lac du Bonnet
Clay McMurren	LGD of Pinawa
Rick Rusk	Town of Powerview-Pine Falls
Bob Bodnaruk	RM of Springfield
Glenn Malkoske	RM of Whitemouth
Roland Dandeneau	Member at Large
Vacant	RM of Victoria Beach
Vacant	Community of Bissett
Vacant	Community of Manigotagan
Vacant	Community of Seymourville
Vacant	Sagkeeng First Nation
Vacant	Whiteshell Provincial Park

Staff:

Mary Greber	Executive Director
Jenny Petersen	Economic Development Officer
Michelle Wazney	Business Development Officer, SE Coordinator
Janice Walker	Business Development Administration Officer
Maureen Macdonald	Community Development Administration Officer
Kandace Nagy	Office Manager
Jimm Simon	Regional Economic Development Coordinator (Term contract)

Our Board members, whose direction and leadership have been instrumental to the success of the Community Futures Program in the North Eastman region, are to be commended for their dedication to the Corporation. During the 2007/08 Fiscal Year, they contributed almost 1,000 hours of volunteer time working to promote and advance community and business development for the betterment of the region.

Partnerships

Partnerships are vital in advancing community economic development within the region and much of what we have achieved over the past year has been made possible by the support and involvement of many partners, including:

- Western Economic Diversification Canada
- Employment Manitoba
- Community Futures Manitoba
- Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre
- Aboriginal Business Service Network
- Municipalities in the North Eastman Region
- Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada/Rural Secretariat
- Manitoba Agriculture, Food & Rural Initiatives
- Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth
- MB4Youth
- Manitoba competitiveness, Training and Trade
- Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation
- J.U.S.T. Training Corporation
- Women's Enterprise Centre
- Aboriginal Business Canada
- Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
- Tribal Wi-Chi-Way-Win Capital Corp.
- Business Development Bank of Canada
- Sunova Credit Union
- Royal Bank
- Community Economic Development Fund
- Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs
- Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs
- Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism
- Manitoba Science, Technology, Energy & Mines
- Community Connections
- Manitoba Labour and Immigration
- Manitoba Rural Team
- Service Canada
- Manitoba Model Forest
- Winnipeg River Regional Roundtable
- Fillmore Riley
- Sunrise School Division
- AIM for Work
- Tembec Paper Group, Pine Falls Operations
- Community Futures Triple R
- Sagkeeng First Nation
- Eastern Manitoba Artists Co-Op
- Independent Living Resource Centre
- Society for Manitobans with Disabilities
- Network for Entrepreneurs with Disabilities
- Literacy Partners of Manitoba
- Mrs. Lucci's Resource Centre
- Beausejour Brokenhead Development Corp.
- Pinawa CDC
- St. Georges CDC
- Grand Beach and Area Development Corp.
- Seymourville CDC
- Whitemouth CDC
- Beausejour & District Chamber of Commerce
- Lac du Bonnet & District Chamber of Commerce
- Falcon, West Hawk & Caddy Lakes Chamber of Commerce
- Pinawa Chamber of Commerce
- Blue Water Chamber of Commerce
- Springfield Chamber of Commerce
- Whitemouth Chamber of Commerce
- Manitoba Science Academy
- Eastman Regional Assessment Committee
- Eastman Regional Development Inc.
- Manitoba Youth Job Centre
- Acsion Industries
- Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba (CDEM)
- Solidarité Rurale du Québec
- TANCO/Cabot Corporation
- WiBand Communications
- Winnipeg Free Press
- HANK FM/CKJS
- La Liberté
- Creative Print All
- Association of Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities
- Town of Beausejour
- RM of Brokenhead
- Town of Lac du Bonnet
- RM of La Broquerie
- RM of Hanover
- Canadian National
- Cando contracting
- Restigouche CBDC
- Sunrise School Division

Business Development Services

Technical Assistance

Community Futures Winnipeg River provides technical assistance to entrepreneurs interested in starting or expanding a business. Our staff have expertise in market research, business planning, and financial forecasting and analysis. We also provide counselling and training in a number of business-related areas. During the 2007-2008 Fiscal Year, we provided 1,545 business development services to 376 clients, including general information services, technical assistance and advisory services, monitoring, and training.

With support from Community Futures Manitoba, our office is equipped with videoconferencing technology. This equipment allows us to provide a convenient and cost-effective way for our clients and other members of the business community to participate in various entrepreneurial training seminars and workshops that are offered in Winnipeg through the Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre. During the 2007/08 Fiscal Year we hosted 43 training sessions for 58 participants.

With support from Community Futures Manitoba through the Rural Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program, we undertook a project to enhance our existing website to be 'accessible' for persons with disabilities. A resource committee consisting of two service providers and two local persons with disabilities provided input on the content and layout of the site. The website was also reviewed by a plain language consultant from the Literacy Partners of Manitoba. The enhanced website includes specific resources for service providers working with people with disabilities who are considering self employment. The website will be officially launched in the near future with an information session for our regional group of service providers and persons with disabilities in the North Eastman region.

Community Futures Winnipeg River acts as a service provider for the Provincial Youth Entrepreneurs Program, and during the Fiscal Year we assisted five clients in the preparation and submission of financing applications under the program.

Staff continue to serve as an information and pathfinding resource for clients, and were successful in partnering with Aboriginal Business Canada, Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, Community Economic Development Fund, Employment Manitoba, Economy and Rural Development Branch - Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, Business Development Bank of Canada, Canada/Manitoba Business Service Centre, Aboriginal Business Service Network, Sunova Credit Union, Royal Bank and Farm Credit Corporation to provide information and access services and/or funding for a number of clients. During this Fiscal Year, our business services helped clients successfully leverage \$801,600 in commercial financing.

One of business clients, Connie Leishman owner of Next Faze Consignment, was featured as a success story in the Community Futures Manitoba Winter/Spring newsletter.

In celebration of Small Business Week, we partnered with Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, Business Development Bank of Canada, and South Interlake Credit Union (now known as Sunova) to organize and host a Wine and Cheese Networking Event that was held at the Lac du Bonnet Community Centre. Invitations were sent to clients and other members of the business community in each of our member communities to set up a display table to market their products

and services. Guest speaker, Benita Stafford-Smith, delivered an entertaining and thought-provoking presentation entitled *“There’s more to life than just work... Easy for you to say, but I own a business”*. Close to 100 people attended the event and feedback received was very positive, with many feeling it was a good opportunity for them to network and establish some valuable contacts.

Investment Funds

The Corporation also acts as an alternative lender and manages investment funds that are used to provide business loans to help finance business start-ups or expansion. During the 2007/08 Fiscal Year, thirteen loans totaling \$597,862 were approved and an additional \$1,003,400 was leveraged through financial institutions or owner equity. Funds borrowed from the Corporation over the past year helped to create or maintain 37.5 full-time equivalent jobs in the region, as well as eight contract positions.

Our Loans program is operated as a revolving fund, with repayments on loans being reinvested to provide the availability of funds for other entrepreneurs to start or expand their business. The total principal and interest reinvested in the Fiscal Year was \$286,096.

Since its inception, Community Futures Winnipeg River has approved 214 loans valued at \$6,411,455 that helped to create or maintain 601 jobs.

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF INVESTMENT FUNDS Inception to March 31, 2008

LOCATION	DOLLARS LENT	OTHER FUNDS LEVERAGED	JOB CREATED/ MAINTAINED
Alexander/Powerview-Pine Falls	\$ 477,408	\$ 906,862	55.0
Beausejour/Brokenhead	\$ 963,667	\$3,128,963	89.5
Lac du Bonnet (Town & RM)	\$1,419,519	\$1,313,119	100.5
Manigotagan/Seymourville/Bissett	\$ 171,295	\$ 230,003	25.5
Pinawa	\$ 989,058	\$1,147,486	85.0
Reynolds	\$ 471,578	\$ 553,500	52.0
Sagkeeng First Nation	\$ 26,000	\$ 10,900	4.0
Springfield	\$ 553,563	\$ 647,500	49.0
Victoria Beach	\$ 174,375	\$ 185,000	24.5
Whitemouth	\$ 489,912	\$1,143,440	48.5
Whiteshell Provincial Park	\$ 512,080	\$1,515,466	50.5
Other	\$ 163,000	\$ 621,575	17.0
Total	\$6,411,455	\$11,403,814	601.0

Self Employment Program (SE)

Our Corporation, on behalf of Employment Manitoba, administers the Self Employment Program (SE) for the North Eastman region. The program provides an opportunity for unemployed individuals who are EI-eligible to start their own business while still being able to collect their employment insurance benefits. SE clients work with our Business Development Officer who assists them with business plan development, marketing, and financial analysis, and provides counselling and monitoring for the full term they are on the program.

Over the past year, 471 services were provided to SE clients in the areas of business planning, monitoring, and counselling. In addition, SE clients participated in a Marketing Workshop, one-on-one bookkeeping training sessions, computer accounting training, and entrepreneurial training sessions via videoconferencing.

This year, seventeen new clients were accepted into the program and ten successfully completed the program. During the 2007/08 Fiscal Year, 21 jobs were created through new business enterprises. There are currently seventeen active SE clients. Since we began delivering the SE Program, 424 people have participated in the program.

Community Development Services

Community Futures Winnipeg River provides assistance to Municipalities, Chambers of Commerce, Community Development Corporations, and other community groups and organizations with project coordination, strategic planning, and facilitation services. We also act as a liaison between the community and various levels of government in the assessment of community challenges and the design of potential solutions. Our office also has current information available on various government programs that may be of benefit to community groups working on specific projects.

Over the past year, Community Futures Winnipeg River has:

- Facilitated eleven strategic planning sessions with community groups
- Assisted three non-profit organizations with the development of By-Laws and Policies and Procedures, and provided advice to two groups related to Board governance issues
- Worked on two tourism-related initiatives
- Organized two community development workshops
- Provided assistance with preparing project plans and feasibility studies to seven groups throughout the region who are undertaking community projects
- Assisted thirteen community groups in with the preparation of funding applications for their projects. These groups were successful in accessing \$20,862 in grant funding during the year.
- Provided resource support, counselling and advice on community economic development to another fifteen groups throughout the region

The following describes some of the major community development projects and initiatives that we have been involved with over the past year.

Whiteshell Community Adjustment Fund

We administer the Whiteshell Community Adjustment Fund on behalf of Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD). A total of \$3.75 Million is being provided by the federal government to assist the economic diversification efforts of communities affected by the downsizing and closure of AECL's operations at Whiteshell Laboratories. A total of 35 projects have been approved for support under the program with all of the funding being committed as of March 31, 2008.

A Steering Committee, composed of representatives of the Corporation and impacted communities, reviews proposals and makes recommendations for funding approval. The Steering Committee met ten times during the past Fiscal Year. Staff responded to seven inquiries regarding the criteria and process for applying for assistance under the program, and provided technical assistance to seven proponents with market research, project plan development, and reviews of preliminary applications and detailed project plans.

In 2007/08, seven projects were approved for funding:

- Town of Lac du Bonnet – \$82,500 to assist with waterline enhancements in order to ensure a stronger and more durable water system is available to support existing business expansion and future business development.
- RM of Whitemouth – \$75,000 to assist with completing a detailed design for a required new water treatment facility which in turn will allow the municipality to undertake some specific economic development initiatives.
- Winnipeg River Regional Roundtable – \$85,000 to assist with the operations and marketing of the Winnipeg River Learning Centre that will offer post-secondary education and trades training in Powerview-Pine Falls.
- Pinawa Community Development Corporation – \$10,000 to assist with the relocation costs of the Pinawa CDC offices and to enhance the overall economic development services of the Corporation.
- Pinawa Community Development Corporation – \$40,000 to assist with the cost of the facility design phase for the development of the Pinawa Business Park.
- Pinawa Housing Corporation – \$100,000 to assist with the construction costs of two entry level homes that will be developed in conjunction with the Employment Manitoba Pre-Apprenticeship Training Program.
- Mrs. Lucci's Resource Centre – \$250,000 to assist with the construction of a building in Lac du Bonnet to deliver vocational training programs to youth and adults in the North Eastman region.

Regional Economic Development Strategy

Jimm Simon, the Regional Economic Development Coordinator, was retained on a part-time contract to continue to work on the regional economic development strategy. Over the past Fiscal Year, the following work was undertaken on the regional economic development strategy:

- Organized and facilitated meetings of the Regional CAO's Committee
- Hosted the Youth Career Symposium in May 2007 which had 60 exhibitors participating and about 2,000 youth attending
- Provided resource support to the Winnipeg River Regional Roundtable and participated on a Sub-Committee to recruit a Coordinator for the Winnipeg River Learning Centre. Participate as a member of an advisory committee for the Winnipeg River Learning Centre.
- Partnering with CDEM (Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba), Eastman Regional Development Inc., and the Association of Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities on the Eastern Manitoba Broadband Project.
- Planning for the second Youth Career Symposium to be held in October 2008.
- Participated on a committee of the Manitoba Rural Team dealing with seniors issues in rural communities. Facilitated a multi-agency workshop to develop a strategy for seniors issues for the Manitoba Rural Team.
- Organized and facilitated a two-day Museum Marketing Workshop in partnership with the Association of Manitoba Museums in February 2008 with 18 individuals participating
- Working with the Lac du Bonnet Chamber of Commerce to organize customer service training workshops through the Manitoba Tourism Education Council (MTEC)
- Facilitated a two-part strategic planning session for the Manitoba Science Academy.

Briefings on the regional strategy were provided to all CAO's within the region, and presentations were made to six Municipal Councils. The monitoring report on the progress on the implementation of the regional economic development strategy was prepared and presented to Councils at the Eastern Regional Municipal Forum in June, October, and January. Copies of the report are available to anyone who is interested in receiving it.

Pinawa Business Incubator

We continued to participate as a member of a local committee governing the Pinawa Business Incubator at the W.B. Lewis Business Centre. The Pinawa Business Incubator provides opportunities for growth for newly-established businesses or home-based businesses that are ready to move into commercial space, hands-on training and mentoring, flexible leasing arrangements, and graduated subsidized rental rates. Community Futures Winnipeg River assists entrepreneurs applying to become Incubator clients with business planning and the development of their Incubation Plan, and provides entrepreneurial training and counselling to Incubator clients.

We prepared a marketing brochure to promote the program, and helped design a survey that was sent out to the business community to assess the interest in shared administrative services that could be provided through the Business Incubator. We met with and conducted the annual review of the first Incubator client, and provided assistance with an application and the preparation of a business plan for a new Incubator client. This client has been approved for participation in the program and is scheduled to open her business in the W.B. Lewis Business Centre in early June 2008.

Human Resource Practices in Small and Medium Enterprises

Community Futures Winnipeg River is participating in a national pilot project on Human Resource Practices in Small and Medium Enterprises in partnership with Restigouche Community Business Development Corporation based in New Brunswick and the . The goal of the pilot project is to increase the effectiveness of human resource management practices within small businesses in

order to increase productivity and competitiveness. We are working with three businesses from our region on this project which entails developing specific diagnostic tools to assess their human resource practices and planning. The project will result in the development of a human resource tool-kit that will be available to our business community.

Throughout the Fiscal Year, we worked with the three businesses to develop their human resource action plans, employee policies and procedures manuals, and performance assessment tools.

Migration Network Project

A major initiative that was worked on during the Fiscal Year was the Migration Network Project. The Migration Network – Villages Fair model, developed by Solidarité Rurale du Québec, was chosen by the Rural Secretariat as a model under the Models for Rural Development and Rural Community Capacity Building Program to provide rural communities with the tools and resources to strategically attract and retain new residents to their area. The model involves working with communities to promote settling in rural areas and for welcoming, integrating and retaining new residents that migrate to their communities. A major component of the model is a public trade show that is held in an urban area to promote the concept of migration of urbanites to rural communities by highlighting community assets, available employment opportunities, and quality of life. Rural Secretariat was interested in the application of the model in other provinces and they approached Community Futures Winnipeg River to undertake the project in Manitoba.

The proposal to undertake the project was prepared and submitted to Rural Secretariat, and support in the amount of \$99,578 was approved to cover the period from April 1, 2007 to March 31, 2008. The project covers the entire Eastern Manitoba region. It is being coordinated through Community Futures Winnipeg River and implemented in partnership with Community Futures Triple R and CDEM. The project entails both migration and immigration, and the public trade show component was called *Showcasing Eastern Manitoba*. Jimm Simon was retained on a part-time contract as a Coordinator to work with communities in the North Eastman area, while Community Futures Triple R retained a Coordinator for the southern portion of the region, and CDEM worked with the Francophone communities.

A Steering Committee composed of representatives of Community Futures Winnipeg River, Triple R, and Manitoba; CDEM; Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives; Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth (MB4Youth Division); Labour and Immigration Manitoba; Rural Secretariat; and Solidarité Rurale du Québec was established to provide direction for the project. Detailed demographic research was undertaken on each of the communities in the region. The Coordinators met with CAO's, Municipal Councils, Chambers and CDC's and three regional information sessions were held to identify communities interested in developing a migration strategy. They worked with those interested communities to identify assets for attracting newcomers and to help them prepare for the Showcasing Eastern Manitoba event. A dedicated website, www.movetomanitoba.com, available in both English and French, was designed and it has information about and links to our communities, resources for communities to assist them in the development of their strategies, and promoted the Showcasing Eastern Manitoba event.

Stanley Events from Oakbank was hired to coordinate the activities associated with the Showcasing event and to liaise with the Winnipeg Convention Centre, Central Display, and exhibitors. Parego Communications was also retained to assist in securing sponsorships to provide the revenue needed to put on the trade show. Sub-Committees were established to develop a marketing plan, and for organizing a one-day learning event that was held the day before the trade show.

The Learning Event component was held on March 14, 2008 at the Winnipeg Convention Centre and included opening remarks from Nancy Allan, Minister of Labour and Immigration, presentations by Margot Bégin-Gillis on the Nova Scotia Immigration Attraction and Retention Strategy, Wilf Falk, Chief Statistician for the Province of Manitoba on the impacts of changing demographic for Eastern Manitoba, Russ Phillips, CAO for the Town of Altona on their successful migration and immigration strategy, as well as a Rural youth Entrepreneurs Panel. Approximately 80 individuals were in attendance and feedback from delegates was very positive.

The *Showcasing Eastern Manitoba* event was held on March 15 and 16, 2008 on the first floor of the Winnipeg Convention Centre. There were 24 exhibitors representing 30 communities and organizations. Approximately 500 people visited the trade show and feedback from visitors and exhibitors was very positive. Attendance was lower than projected, however those that did come displayed genuine interest in the region as a place to “Live, Work, and Play”. Feedback from communities has indicated that some have already experienced results from their participation in the form of housing sales, purchases of land by developers, and spikes in the hits on their websites.

The Rural Secretariat has since extended the project to the end of September 2008 in order to collect some additional research information as part of the participatory evaluation framework of the Models Program. Community Futures Winnipeg River, Community Futures Triple R, and CDEM have committed to continue to work with interested communities to complete the development of their migration strategies.

Central Manitoba Rail Line Business Development Plan

In January 2008, funding in the amount of \$78,750 was approved by Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) towards cost-sharing the preparation of a business development plan for the Central Manitoba Rail Line with the Province through Manitoba Infrastructure and Transportation. The business development plan will include an assessment of current financial shortfalls relating to the railway line that runs between Bird’s Hill and Powerview-Pine Falls, traffic enhancement opportunities, options for the viability of continued rail operations, and potential business growth that may benefit from rail service, as well as the prospects for a strategic and phased approach to public-private partnerships.

A Request for Proposal was prepared and issued to a dozen rail transportation consultants with seven proposals being received. The successful bidder was QGI Consultants. The draft report for the business development plan has been received and reviewed, and the final report is expected soon.

2007/08 Award Recipients

Each year, Community Futures Winnipeg River honours outstanding business clients and community initiatives.

The Business of the Year Award and the Youth Entrepreneur of the Year Award recognizes outstanding efforts by our business clients who have demonstrated success in the development of their businesses, have clear objectives for growth, and who relay an attitude of commitment and cooperation to the community and other businesses.

The Self Employment Award is presented to Self Employment Program participants who have demonstrated above average effort and success during their year of the program, and who have achieved set goals and used innovation, judgement, and skill to deal with obstacles they faced in their first year of business.

The Community Initiative Award is presented to a community organization that has utilized our services, in recognition of their efforts to advance a project intended to contribute to community economic development in the region.

The Volunteer of the Year Award recognizes and celebrates the outstanding volunteer contributions made by a resident of the region to the economic development efforts of their community.

Community Futures Winnipeg River is very pleased to acknowledge the winners of this year's awards:

- **Business of the Year Award:** Lucia Ross-Dola and Jaret Dola, Seddons Corner Station, RM of Lac du Bonnet
- **Youth Entrepreneur of the Year Award:** Tonya Kemball, Chicken Chef, Powerview-Pine Falls
- **Self Employment Award:** Katherine MacFarlane, Balanced Business (Bookkeeping Solutions), Garson
- **Self Employment Award:** Steven Penner, Penner Underground, Whitemouth
- **Community Initiative Award:** Winnipeg River Regional Roundtable, Winnipeg River Learning Centre, Powerview-Pine Falls
- **Volunteer of the Year Award:** Stu Iverson, Pinawa